



Patient & Family Guide
2015

Injectable Iron and Chronic Kidney Disease



www.nshealth.ca

Injectable Iron Sucrose (Venofer®) or Sodium Ferric Gluconate Complex (Ferrlecit®) and Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD)

What is injectable iron?

- Iron sucrose (Venofer®) and sodium ferric gluconate complex (Ferrlecit®) are injectable forms of iron that help your body make hemoglobin. Hemoglobin is found in your red blood cells. When there is not enough iron, red blood cells don't have enough hemoglobin to carry oxygen throughout your body.
- If your body is not getting enough oxygen due to lack of iron, you may feel tired or short of breath. This is called iron deficiency anemia.

Why does someone with CKD need this medicine?

- Many patients with CKD, or those on dialysis, have anemia because their red blood cells are low. Your kidneys make a hormone called erythropoietin (EPO) that tells your body to make red blood cells.
- When you have CKD, you may not make enough EPO. This causes your red blood cell count to drop and anemia to develop. Some people with CKD may need to take medicine called erythropoiesis-stimulating agent (ESA)

that acts like EPO to make more red blood cells.

- The body also needs iron to help make new red blood cells.
- Getting iron injections can help make sure that you have enough iron to make the oxygen-carrying part (hemoglobin) of your red blood cells.
- If you need an ESA medicine, you will need enough iron in your body for this medicine to work its best.

How do I take injectable iron?

- This medicine is given intravenously (injected into a vein) and will be set up by a member of your kidney care team. After each dose of IV iron, you will need to stay for 30 minutes so staff can check for any reaction to the medicine.
- If you are doing your own dialysis at home, and are administering your own IV iron, we will explain the proper steps to take and medicine (EpiPen®) needed in the rare case that a severe allergic reaction (anaphylactic shock) happens.

If you have any questions, please ask.

We are here to help you.

Are there any side effects?

- The most common side effects are:
 - › Nausea (feeling sick to your stomach)
 - › Vomiting (throwing up)
 - › Muscle cramps
 - › Rash
 - › Itchiness at the injection site
 - › Low blood pressure
- Rare, but serious, side effects include:
 - › Anaphylaxis (allergic reaction to iron)
 - › Shortness of breath

How should I store this medicine?

- If you are doing your own dialysis at home, store it at room temperature.
- Keep out of reach of children.

Looking for more health information?

Contact your local public library for books, videos, magazines, and other resources.
For more information go to <http://library.novascotia.ca>

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If you have any questions, please ask your healthcare provider.

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The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years or as needed.